Looking by the Window, I Can See

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Summary

George goes to investigate his new neighbor, only to discover a handsome man who is slowly freezing to death.

(AKA Dream and George are neighbors who want to be cuddling but can't communicate to save their lives.)

George's new neighbor was annoying as hell. Any time George would go into his living room, he would hear humming and groaning echoing off the empty apartment, and every once and a while, a muffled but clear, "FUCK!" It was getting really irritating. George didn't like confrontation, though, so he had just been ignoring it as best he could. He had powerful headphones, so he could block out a lot of the sound, but every once and a while, he would hear some other ridiculous thing from his neighbor. It was really grating on him.

Finally, he couldn't take it. He reasoned with himself that it didn't have to be a confrontation, per se, just a conversation about remembering that they shared walls. George could be polite, even when lecturing someone, so hopefully it wouldn't go too badly.

With careful bracing and a kind smile, George knocked on the door, a little hesitantly. He did not get what he expected.

The man on the other end was completely wrapped up in layer upon layer clothing, scarves, hats,

coats, gloves, and a blanket around his shoulders. The only thing George could really even see was his intense golden eyes, peeking out from under all the fabric.

The next thing George noticed was the cool air drifting into the hall from the man's apartment. George, who was wearing a sweater, wrapped his arms around himself, already chilly.

"Um, yeah, how can I help you?" the man asked. He had a really appealing voice, and, surprisingly, an American accent.

"Nevermind that," George said, "Why is it so cold in your place? Is your heater broken?"

"Nah, just bad luck. The person who lived here before me was an adulterer apparently, so I had the wonderful welcome present of a rock thrown through my window this morning. It had a lovely note describing all of the terrible things the previous tenant did. The person who threw the rock looked really embarrassed when I poked my head out the window, but they just ran off."

"Yeah, the guy who used to live here was a real piece of work. Why not use your heater though?"

"It's literally right in front of my broken window, so all the hot air just gets sucked back outside. Didn't feel like wasting money."

"Damn, that really sucks."

"Yeah." The man groaned with an involuntary shiver of cold. "It doesn't help that I'm from Florida. I don't think I've ever been this cold in my life!"

"Do you want to borrow some blankets or sweaters or something?"

"I'll be alright... I'm actually waiting for the repair guy to come by, which is why I am stuck in the living room. Probably won't be much longer..."

"Alright, well... If you need anything, let me know, okay?" George said, earnestly.

The man's mouth was hidden, but his smile could be seen in his eyes. "Thank you so much, uh...?"

"Oh, right! George." He held out his hand.

The man took it with a glove that shook as it approached. "Dream."

Dream's hands were strong, and the handshake sent a shiver through George, though it might have just been the cold. "Nice to meet you, Dream. Good luck!"

"Yeah, thanks, George." With that, Dream receded back into his icy apartment, gently shutting the door.

George lingered for a moment, feeling *something*, before shaking his head and going back inside.

His apartment felt deliciously warm, like absolute heaven. He rubbed his hands up and down his arms, trying to friction the chill out of them, and felt the heater doing its work. Suddenly, he felt a little guilty. As a man from England, he had a pretty good tolerance to cold. It seemed unfair that he should have heat when the man from the swampy, humid south did not.

He pressed his ear against the wall between them, and he could hear it clear as day. The sounds he had been getting snatches of before were clearly Dream being exceedingly cold and complaining about it. George could hear the chattering teeth, the groans of frustration, the jumping around to

warm up, and the occasional, "Fuck, it's so fucking cold!" hissed through clenched teeth.

That would not do. George pursed his lips. It was far too cold in there. The forecast called for snow that day, too, and Dream would not be able to handle that, clearly. George thought about it for a moment, before giving in. He went back out into the hall and knocked on the door once more.

"Um, hey, George. What's up?" Dream asked, skepticism flashing through those pretty eyes.

"Do you want to come to my place for some hot cocoa? My heater works, and I can at least give you a little break from the chill. And you should be able to hear the repair guy, even from my side."

"You're not, like, a murderer, are you?" Though, with the way Dream was already leaning towards the promise of heat, it didn't look like he would care.

"I'm as much of a murderer as you are."

"Ah, damn. Well, then I definitely can't come over. We'll just kill each other, and that would be super awkward."

George laughed at that. It kind of burst out of him, surprising him and Dream. "I think we'll be fine. Come on over."

Dream seemed to like making George laugh. The entirety of his face (or, at least, the parts George could see) lit up with delight. "Thanks. I'll try really hard not to kill you."

"Same here," George giggled, leading him inside.

The moment Dream crossed the threshold, he relaxed. The tenseness from trying so desperately to warm up dripped off him like melting snow, and he quickly started to strip the layers of clothing, adjusting for the more reasonable temperature of George's place.

For some reason, George felt like he needed to look away, even though he knew Dream wasn't going to get naked. He didn't have it in him to do so, though, especially when Dream turned out to be an incredibly handsome man. A shock of messy, dirty blond waves, jaw like cut glass, and a long, lithe figure that seemed impossibly strong. George was practically ogling the poor man by that point, so he forced himself to avert his gaze, hoping that Dream hadn't noticed.

"It feels so much better in here. Thanks, man." Dream said.

George turned back, to be polite in conversation, and managed to catch Dream stretching, which tugged the ends of his golden sweater up and revealed the lower planes of his abdomen. Fucking hell. He had to flip away again, focusing heavily on the tub of hot cocoa in front of him. "Uh, yeah, no worries..."

Dream wandered over to him, standing a touch too close to watch George work. "Store brand hot cocoa?" He asked, incredulously, "You live in Europe, the land of amazing chocolate, and this is what you do to yourself?"

George shrugged, not really wanting to be judged by a total stranger, no matter how cute. "First off, Brits don't really consider themselves European, and second, it does the job. I'm out of the good stuff, unless you've got something better?"

"I do, actually. Be right back!" Dream grabbed a coat and bounded out the door, disappearing before George could say a word.

"I was kidding," he said to the cocoa powder in front of him.

Dream returned a few minutes later, teeth chattering and body shaking, triumphantly holding up a hexagonal box. "I found it!"

"It's really not that serious, Dream."

"No, it is! Besides, my goal was to share this piece of me with someone in the UK, so it works out!"

George rolled his eyes. "And I suppose you'll need to prepare it too?"

"Well, of course. I don't think you'd know what to do with it."

"Why did I invite you into my flat? You're ridiculous."

"And you're cute when you're frustrated," Dream teased.

George spun on heel, turning to the cabinets to hide the heat rising in his cheeks. "So, what will you need to make this stuff?"

Dream was laughing, a kind of tea kettle wheezing sound that stole his breath. George peeked at him, to find him gripping the counter, practically collapsing from it.

"What's so funny?" George demanded.

"You... turned... so ... fast!" Dream gasped, sending himself into another fit of giggles.

"Shut *up*." George tried to be angry, but the way Dream's face lit up when he laughed was setting a fire inside of him. He couldn't let Dream know that, though. "Seriously, I can kick you out at any time."

Dream finally managed to calm down, still with a stupid(ly cute) grin on his face. "You wouldn't put me out in the cold."

"Under normal circumstances, no, but you are being absurd."

"You'll change your tune after I make you this hot chocolate. I need a sharp knife, a cutting board, a small pot, and some milk. You do have milk, don't you?"

"I wouldn't offer you hot chocolate if I didn't have milk," George scoffed.

"Alright, good, then you're not *completely* hopeless."

"It would be better if you were a murderer," George groaned, pulling the jug of full fat milk out of the fridge.

"I think you kind of like me, actually."

George rolled his eyes again, being sure Dream could see, and didn't even bother to reply. The real problem was that Dream was *right*. George did like him, and more than just kind of, but he wasn't going to tell the man he just met all of that. "Whatever. Are all Americans this vain? Or just the ones from Florida?"

"I mean, when you look the way I do..."

"Ridiculous. The only reason I haven't kicked you out yet is because I'm curious. What could possibly be so great about this chocolate, to the point that you ran back into your freezing flat to grab it?" George asked, dropping the rest of the supplies on the counter.

"Ah, see, but this is Ibarra," Dream replied, eyes glinting with excitement, "This is as close to Mexican drinking chocolate as you'll ever get, probably. It's delightful. I couldn't bring the real thing with me, but this is close enough."

Seeing Dream's passion for it made George soften just a bit, especially as he realized it was a piece of home. "Oh, yeah? Did you have it a lot in Florida?"

"Not as much as I should have... Besides, it was actually more common to find Cuban hot chocolate, but no one has packaged it yet. At least as far as I know."

George could listen to him talk for hours. "Tell me about Florida, then. All I know is the memes. You know, Florida Man and wrestling alligators and all that."

Dream laughed (George really liked his laugh), and started to open the box. "There is more to Florida than those two things, but I have to admit they are a part of it."

He pulled a huge brick of chocolate out, circular and sliced like a pizza, before setting it down on the cutting board. A healthy amount of milk went into the pan, though there was no measuring of any kind, and the pan went on the heat. Dream rolled up the sleeves of his sweater, revealing forearms that had no right to be that sexy (seriously, how could forearms be sexy?), and began to chop the chocolate and talk about Florida.

Now that Dream was focused on the task, George was free to stare, and stare he did. He drank in every line, every angle, every curve. How did a man so lanky have an ass like that? George couldn't help but think that it was unfair, especially since Dream seemed to *know* it. Hell, even the *way* he chopped up the chocolate, so sure and coordinated, was delicious to watch.

George knew he was gay, but did he have to be this gay?

Finally, Dream was scraping the chocolate into the heated milk, and George couldn't stare anymore. He met Dream's gaze and listened to him intently, his siblings, his home, his family, his friends, and the reason he had moved to the UK, or, as he put it, "the cold and dank." Apparently, there was a good school in the area.

George listened to it all with rapt attention, letting his eyes drift to the pot of melting chocolate occasionally, simply because it gave him an excuse to peek at Dream's body again.

"Well, I think that should do it!" Dream announced, giving the hot chocolate a couple of test stirs.

"It smells heavenly," George admitted.

"Wait until you taste it!"

George rummaged around in the cupboards, looking for some good mugs, and handed them to Dream, who promptly filled them both with a careful pour from the pot. Once full, Dream handed one mug to George and kept one for itself.

George couldn't help but savor the warmth in his hands. He didn't make himself warm beverages nearly enough, simply because the clean up was never worth it. Even before he tasted the apparently delicious drink Dream had made him, he knew he wouldn't mind doing the dishes this time.

After blowing carefully, Dream was the first to take a sip, desperate to loosen the last bits of cold that clung like icicles to his bones. He might have burned his tongue slightly, but he didn't react like he had. "Mmm, it's so much better in a place that's *actually* cold enough for it."

George was much more careful. He blew on it for a while longer, and rested the cup on his lip to test the temperature, before finally taking his first sip.

Wow, it was good.

It was thick and strong, with a bit of spice and such a complicated flavor. George let it roll around on his tongue, trying to experience every aspect of it, eyelids fluttering slightly.

"Yeah? What do you think?" Dream asked, gripping his cup with anticipation.

George *really* wanted to be sarcastic. He wanted to be mean and flippant and sardonic about it. He didn't want to give this perfect man the satisfaction of being good at something, but the thought of Dream's sad face was strangely unappealing, and he couldn't bear to lie about the quality. "Fuck, it's actually delicious. It's actually *so* good!"

"Right?" Dream's grin split his entire face, and it made George a little giddy to see. "It's so amazing! I'm so glad I got to share it with you- someone. With someone."

George didn't comment on that slip up. Even if Dream had been blushing (he was), George wouldn't be able to tell, and there was no way this adonis would think he was cute too. "Yeah, I'm glad you did... Am I the first Brit you've, like, properly met since coming here?"

"Well, I only moved in a little while ago, so, yeah..."

"Then welcome to England, Dream!"

Dream stared into his mug, pursing his lips for a moment, before finally meeting George's eyes with a gaze that almost bowled him over, and said, "This is a wonderful welcome."

George was blushing in a second. He could feel the heat in his cheeks, and he knew that other people could see that apparent redness as it spread across people's faces. He had never understood why the body came with a built in "I'm embarrassed!" alarm, especially one he couldn't see himself. "Uh, thank you... It was mostly you, though. You made the hot chocolate."

"Yeah, but it wouldn't have been as fun to make it for myself, especially if I was still buried under all that cloth trying not to freeze."

"That makes sense I suppose... Anyway, you wanna sit? The repair man isn't known for his timeliness. Hope you don't mind being here for a while."

"I don't mind at all."

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They ended up talking for hours, not even realizing that time had passed. At first, they stuck to "normal" topics, like family, school, and hobbies. Soon, it became clear they had a lot in common. A penchant for coding, a passion for Minecraft, and a competitive nature in each of them that

complimented the other. In a few hours, they were talking like best friends, laughing and joking and teasing like they had known each other for years.

It almost made it easier for George to deal with how hot his new friend was.

Suddenly, it was 10 pm, and there was no way the repair person was still coming. Dream checked his phone to see a voicemail from hours ago that told him the repairs had been delayed to the following day.

Dream dragging his hands over his face in frustration. "Fucking hell! Don't they know I'm freezing here?"

"I'm so sorry, Dream. You sure you don't want those extra blankets? And, I mean, I'm pretty sure neither of us are murderers. You can stay here if you need? O-on the couch, of course! Or, I c-can take the couch! Whatever works..."

"I really appreciate that, but I'll be alright. I have a lot of blankets on my bed, and I think there's a heater in the bedroom." Dream gave him a reassuring smile and stood. "Speaking of, I should probably..."

"Yeah, no, of course! I totally- Yeah, it's late." George stood as well, trying to ignore the fact that, when standing, his face was right at Dream's chest.

They stood for a moment, unsure of how to say goodbye. Both of them wanted to test the boundaries, to find the exact balance of want and appropriate, but both were scared of going too far. Finally, Dream just asked, "Do... Do you wanna hug?"

George's shoulders sank with relief. "Sure, why not?"

The hug was... Is there a word better than perfect? Dream's arms were... And his chest? His whole body?! It wasn't fair. Dream wrapped himself around George, drawing him in and gathering him up. George fit against Dream's body so perfectly, slotting exactly into his chest. Their arms arranged themselves just so, and it just *worked*. George had to force himself to focus, to retract, to let go, even as he was a little dizzy from how *phenomenal* it felt.

He wondered if Dream felt it too.

Dream cleared his throat a little, and said, "Um... Yeah... Anyways... Lovely to meet you, George."

"Definitely. Rest well."

Dream spun on his heel, gathered the layers of clothing. and walked out the door without another word. All George could do was stand there, stunned, staring at the empty space his new friend had just been in, and wonder.

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The moment Dream closed his door behind him, he fell back against it, sliding down to the cold floor as his legs gave out from under him. What was *that*? Giving a guy he just met a hug? Clinging to him like his life depended on it, to the point that George had to pull away? What was

wrong with him?

Had George been flirting?

No, that was impossible. George had been so uncomfortable for the entire night, looking away and shutting things down so quickly. There was no way he was into it. Was he?

Dream shook his head. This was a problem for the future. It had been a long, mostly cold day, and he was genuinely tired. His sleep schedule was still off from flying across the ocean, and he was ready for bed.

The full body flush from the hug began to fade, and the cold started to sink in again. Dream quickly layered up, hoping to preserve those last moments of George's heat. Maybe it would help him get through the night.

After getting fully ready for bed, he slid under the covers, heater running, and waited. The apartment was old, with thin doors and shit insulation, he could already tell. He lay, shivering, for a long time, but the heat never quite got to him. He suddenly realized that the draft from the window was probably drawing it all out from the gap under the door.

Dream jammed the heels of his palms into his eyes and groaned (quietly, since it was late). George had offered to let him stay the night, but who knew how serious that was? Dream was starting to get desperate though, as the cold started to sink into his very bones, leaving him wondering if he would ever be able to get warm again.

George's apartment was warm.

Fuck.

After a healthy amount of internal debate, he let out a grumble of intense frustration and anxiety and got out of his bed, wrapping most of the bed clothes around him. He couldn't believe he was really about to knock on a stranger's door in the middle of the night, but he was genuinely so cold, and snow had started to drift in through the hole in the window. He really didn't have another option.

The sound of knocking was so loud at the late hour, that Dream almost went back to his room, though it probably would have been worse if the door opened to an empty hallway. After a few minutes of nervous waiting, George finally appeared, hair mussed and eyes half shut from sleep. He was wearing a plain white t-shirt and pajama bottoms, and fuck was he pretty.

"Hello?" he mumbled, barely conscious, "Dream?"

Wow, George's sleepy voice was so cute. "Hey George... I'm so sorry to wake you, but the heater in my room isn't working because of the draft, and-"

George put a finger to his lips, silencing him, then grabbed his hand without a word. Dream followed him, confused, as the half-asleep man dragged him through the apartment and into his bedroom. His anxiety started to spike as they approached the bed, and he wondered what he had gotten himself into. "George, what are you-"

"Shhhhh," George murmured, "Sleep." He pointed to the bed, then crawled under the covers. When Dream didn't move, George's arm flashed out and grabbed his, tugging him to the bed and demanded, "Sleeeeeeeeep."

Dream let his blankets fall to the ground and crawled in after, still apprehensive, but pretty sure

George was too close to unconscious to do anything.

Being under the covers was magical. It was practically hot, and it felt like home. He snuggled under immediately, finally feeling the tug of drowsiness. Once he was fully encased in blankets, he could feel George, a fiery body next to his. For a while, he honestly couldn't sleep, despite the delicious warmth. Lying next to George was so intoxicating. He just hoped that George would remember him in the morning.

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George woke up feeling exquisite. He was warm, in his bed, feeling just so... wonderful for some reason. He stretched, yawning slightly, and accidentally pushed his hand into something alive. In fact, there was something wrapped around his torso. "What the hell?!" He scrambled frantically, only to realize it was an arm, gripping his chest. His eyes followed the arm to its source, finding a shock of blond hair peeking out from under the covers.

## Dream?

With that realization, he started to remember. He had been woken by a knock in the middle of the night, and no one had ever knocked before, so he had to check it out. When he realized it was just Dream, all he wanted was to be cozy and asleep again, so he dragged the man back to his mattress, just so he would shut up. He had no energy for, or interest in, fixing up the couch.

And now Dream was asleep in his bed. What should he do? He felt like he was taking advantage. Dream was clearly unconscious, despite holding on to him for dear life, and now that he was awake and not confused, it was wonderful. He couldn't help but savor it, and lean into the warm body next to him. Was it wrong to enjoy his embrace?

As he thought about, Dream started to wake up, stretching out against him without a care in the world, until it hit him. His eyes flew open, and he saw, "George!" Dream scrambled off, practically throwing himself out of the bed until he fell to the floor. "Fuck, I'm so sorry!"

"No, no! It's alright! It happens," George soothed, blushing slightly.

"Are you sure it's okay?"

"Yeah, honestly, it's fine." George started laughing, leaning over the bed a little to get the full view of Dream on the ground. "I can't believe you actually fell off the bed!"

Dream pouted. "I didn't want you to think I was being... inappropriate."

"You were literally sleeping. It's okay." It was honestly more than okay, and if George had an extra sliver of courage, he would have asked Dream to join him again.

"Well... Thank you..." Dream pulled himself up, gathering the blankets and tossing them back onto the bed. He almost said something else, but then there was a knock.

"Repair man! I'm here about a window?" the man called, echoing through the hallway.

"Oh, well... I guess I'd better be going then..."

"Yeah, I guess so..." George tried to hide his disappointment. "Oh! Wait, um... Listen, if you ever have issues with the heat again just... Just let me know, okay? We can hang out again sometime or... something." He could feel the fire in his face, and he wished he just hadn't said anything.

Dream grinned. "That sounds great. Thanks, George."

"Of course."

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Over the next few weeks, they found themselves hanging out more and more. It was amazing that they hadn't interacted before, considering that they ran in a lot the same online circles. Both of them knew BadBoyHalo from MunchyMC, and, through him, they had met a lot of the same people.

They ended up hanging out almost every night, growing closer and closer as they did, but they never touched, and they never talked about what happened that night. George was too afraid to mention anything because of how much he wanted it, and Dream was terrified that George had hated it, so they just ignored it, pretended it never happened, and moved on.

But as they lay alone in their separate beds, they would imagine the other crawling in, a welcome surprise, and cuddling against their body. If only they had the courage to say something.

Finally, after almost a month, Dream had an idea. He turned off all the heaters in his apartment early in the morning one Saturday, and didn't say anything at all. He couldn't *ask* for it. George had to offer. Maybe simply communicating would be better, but Dream would rather freeze.

Around 1 pm, George walked in, without knocking, as usual, and managed to get several steps inside before it hit him. "Wow, it's cold as fuck in here!"

Dream was on the couch in a puddle of blankets, wrapped in layers of clothing. "Yeah, no kidding."

"Why didn't you say something? Let's go to my place!" George offered, without even a moment's hesitation.

"Are you sure?" Dream asked, trying to talk about the unintentional cuddles without saying the words.

"Of course I'm sure. Let's go before one of us freezes!"

Dream shed most of the blankets and followed George, shivering and chattering all the way, and he didn't even need to exaggerate.

George's apartment was warm and cozy, and Dream always felt happiest there, happiest with George. It was getting pretty bad, but he couldn't do anything about it except to pine and hope that one day, George would just figure it out.

It was a relatively normal day. They hung out at George's all the time, so Dream's heater being "broken" didn't change things that much. The only real difference was that Dream was a little on edge all day, trying to come up with an excuse to not sleep on the couch. The whole purpose of this

was to sleep next to George again, even if they didn't touch. Nothing good was coming to mind.

Thankfully, as night fell, George came up with the excuse for him. "Hey, Dream... I hope you don't mind, but I really don't feel like making up the couch... I mean, I can, if you want, but my bed is pretty big, you wanna just..."

"Oh yeah, that's totally fine! No worries at all."

Dream went back to his place to get ready, returning with chattering teeth and shaky limbs, and George looked at him longingly, but did nothing. There were a few moments of awkward dancing around each other, trying to figure out how to get into bed with your friend, especially for Dream, who was starting to fall in love, but they figured it out. They lay next to each other, each of them on their backs, staring at the ceiling.

Dream really wanted to cuddle.

Instead, after some awkward giggling and teasing, they just fell asleep.

The next morning, Dream found himself completely wrapped around George again. His arm was cinched around George's waist, and his head was resting on George's chest. A jolt of panic ran through him, but then he felt George's arm draped across his back and the hand petting his head. He pretended to be asleep a little longer, savoring it. It felt so good to hold and be held like this, and he never wanted it to end.

Eventually though, an alarm went off, and George jumped, dropping his arm so as to not be caught. Dream "woke up" with a start and apologized again. He genuinely hadn't meant to grab on to George in the middle of the night. George smiled sheepishly, and again promised that it was okay.

They said nothing else about it.

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This started happening sporadically, and the nights got closer and closer together. George was starting to go wild. He was pretty sure that Dream's heat wasn't breaking this often. After one of the nights, he dropped by later that day and the place was practically hot, but there had been no repairman, at least not that he had heard.

He didn't have the courage to ask Dream about it though, especially because it all seemed so accidental. George was starting live for sleep induced cuddling, but it wasn't something Dream did on purpose, and he seemed so embarrassed after. How could this possibly be something he could talk to Dream about?

Then, one night, Dream was at his door again, chattering away. "Georgie, m-my heater."

George knew there was only one thing he could do. "Oh, yeah? Let me see if there is something I can do to fix it." He gave Dream a lovely smile and stepped into the hallway.

"No, George!" Dream called after him, "It's so c-cold in there! I wouldn't want you to-"

"Nonsense. I have a high tolerance to cold, I'll be fine." He didn't stop for a moment.

Dream continued to protest, and the more he did, the more George started to wonder. Had Dream done it on purpose?

George found the heater and crouched down, turning the dial up one tick. The heater flared to life immediately, warming the area directly around it in seconds. "Interesting..."

"George, I..." Dream trailed off, completely unsure of what to say.

"You know, it might help your heaters work if you turned them on?"

"George, I'm so sorry. I just... Fuck, I don't... I mean, God, you must think... I'm really not...! Like, I would never...!" Dream babbled, face taut with worry.

George laughed, enjoying Dream's discomfort a little too much. There was something so cute about his handsome friend getting caught being needy like this. "You know, if you wanted to cuddle, you could have just *asked*."

Dream's stream of apologies broke off, leaving him sputtering for a moment. "W-what?"

"I mean, why do you think I let you in? You cuddle in your sleep! I felt so gross! Like here I am, inviting a man with a broken heater into my bed, because I know he will cuddle me in the night."

"Oh... wow, I... I mean, I felt skeevy myself. Turning my heater off just to get a chance to lie next to you... I'm sorry."

"Honestly, me too, because we could have been just snuggling together weeks ago! You want to go back to my place?"

"That sounds wonderful."

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